

To the Uncertain Future Clinical Practitioner

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Reflection

The main concepts discussed throughout the course were importance of human connection, feedback and compassionate conversation. I feel that the guidance and discussions we had delved deeper into these underlying concepts that I know about, but didn't visualize the application of. Being the excited and nervous future practitioner, I am, it was reassuring and motivating to know that there is no definite or correct way of applying any of these concepts. They are best used in clinical practice with a personal touch. If my intent as a clinical practitioner is to provide the best service and build a relationship with my patient and their family, I will be able to apply the above-mentioned concepts in the best way. With a clear intent to serve, all of these concepts become interconnected and really come down to fostering a relationship with colleagues, patients, families and everyone that may be directly or indirectly a part of the caregiving team.

As a future practitioner, I've learned some simple and effective communication techniques and methods of interaction throughout this week. Techniques that I didn't truly know the impact of. For example, the impact of a kind touch or glance goes so far. It fills a deep emotional gap that patients feel when they are at the hospital. It is very easy as caregivers to naturally assume the superior position, but it is essential to remind yourself to put the patient first and remain at their level. They are caregivers to themselves, just as much as you are to them as a professional caregiver. With giving and receiving feedback, I contemplated on the fact that as a future caregiver, I will have to listen to comments that may be harsh or untrue, but to be resilient and tolerant will allow me to improve and prevent burnout. If feedback is just taken as information rather than associating a positive or negative connotation with it, then it becomes a method of improvement.

With a human connection and constant desire to improve, compassionate conversation would come naturally. Compassionate conversation is about building a relationship. A relationship revolves around trust, empathy and respect. The ability to cultivate an environment where such conversations become a norm make medical interventions and treatments much easier.

I discovered that validating, appropriate questioning, and empathy are some of the most effective communication skills. As healthcare practitioners, we see multiple patients a day. There are multiple stories we hear every day, and sometimes it becomes easier to not let ourselves emote and feel what the patient and their family feels. I believe, this desensitizes us as people. Hence, validating their emotions allows us to remind ourselves of situations where we may have experienced a similar myriad of emotions. By asking the right questions, open ended and kind, we facilitate conversation. It allows us to get information that we may not get otherwise. Often times, these are the conversations that are needed to lighten the mental burden of the patient or their family and make them feel emotionally supported. The right questions allow them to open up and lower their barriers. Finally, showing empathy and a sense of presence is extremely impactful. Empathy translates to understanding, compassion, kindness, respect and so many other safety nets for the speaker. It calms them down and de-escalates the situation. Yes, we may not be able to solve their problem or provide definitive steps, but simply listening and aligning perspectives makes a difference in the thought process of the patient and their family.

This course had been very insightful. Along with providing encouragement for me to introspect and note points for my future practice and profession, it reassured the uncertain

practitioner in me. I am inspired to go ahead and do my best,
while being me.